



Book review

Report Writing for Criminal Justice Professionals 5th ed. by Larry S. Miller and John T. Whitehead Published by Elsevier ISBN: 978-1-4557-7769-3

This is an American book and much of what it contains does not apply in the United Kingdom. Some does apply to the reports written by Forensic Medical Examiners.

It should be noted that this is the Fifth Edition of this book, which does seem to indicate that it is read and found useful by many.

It includes Law Enforcement Reports to determine potential charge. Security Reports and Probation Reports.

Forensic and Scientific Reports are the most applicable for Forensic Medical Examiners. There is a small section devoted to them and it states what must be recorded, Case ID, Who made the request, Summary of Examination, Opinion, Signature and ID of Examiner.

It goes on to say refrain from using Scientific and Medical jargon and take care to write or print legibly.

There can be a lot of useful data in other reports, such as Security Officers', but you have your own criteria to follow.

Do Not Use Legalese Old Fashioned Terminology.

Accuracy is important in word usage as well as in information.

Brevity is important, as long as it is not used at the cost of losing accuracy or completeness.

Completeness is essential.

The authors give a summary of requirements, some of which are applicable to all agencies.

4. Remember that your job is to investigate, not just to record what people tell you.

At the end of each chapter, there is a test. This takes the form of statements being made and the reader has to fill in missing words.

There are many suggestions as to how to write, many of which seem to be terribly obvious. — face page, narrative, habits, reading and correcting.

There is a whole section on the mechanics of report writing, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, spelling and abbreviating.

Everything is described in great detail with examples being given.

In summary. One can say that it is a well written and composed book. However, it contains a lot more material than a Forensic Medical Examiner would find relevant or necessary. I feel that an English readership would feel quite insulted by the presumed lack of intelligence.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

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1. Reports are written for operational and administrative purposes.
3. The minimum information for reports includes the *who, what, when, where and how* with necessary details.